



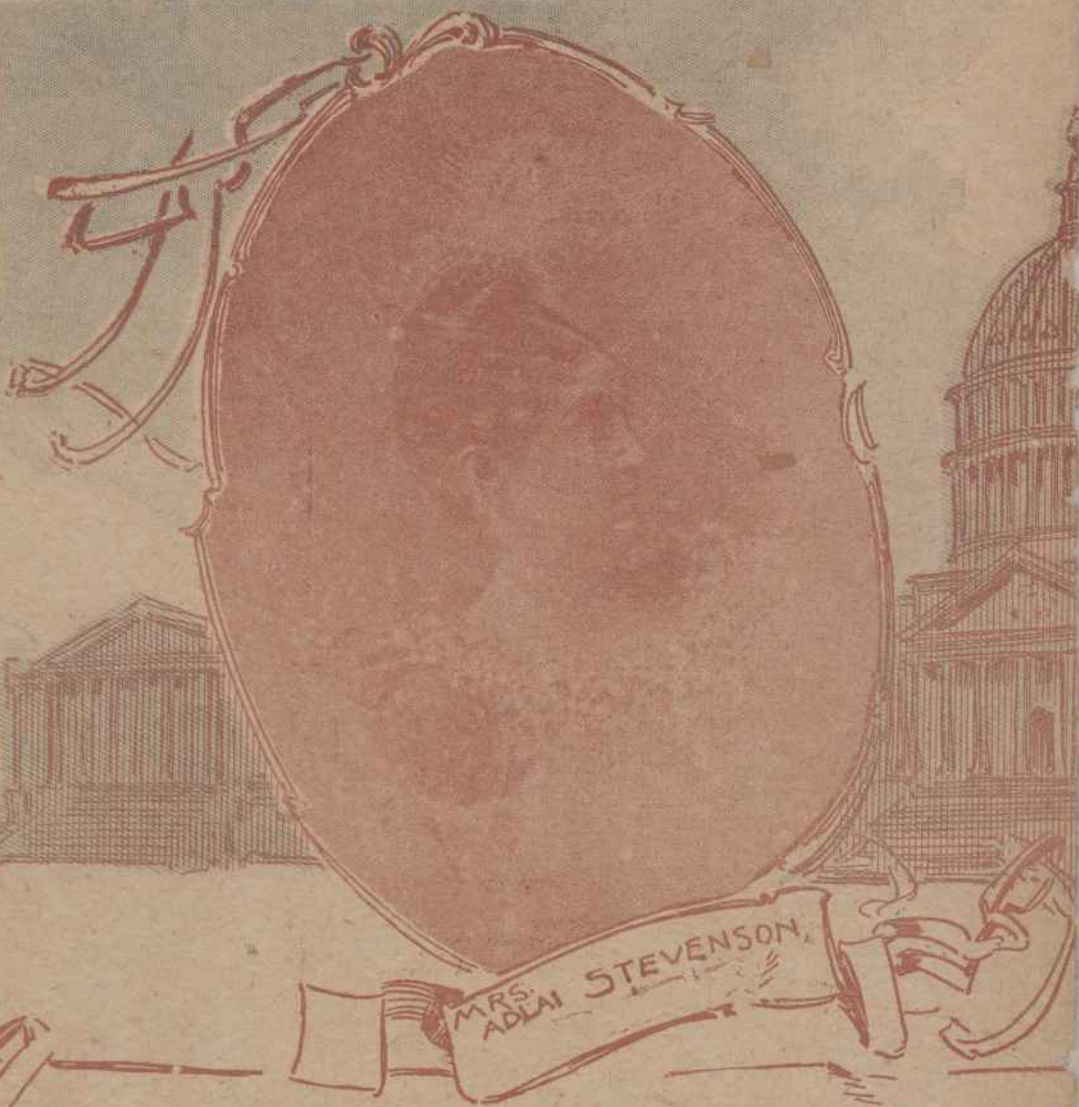
MRS. MARY E. MUMFORD.



MRS. JOHN B. LEWIS.



MRS. EMMA MORTON.



MRS. ADLAI STEVENSON.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRE CONGRESS TO THE



WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 20.—The first National Congress of Mothers did not fail to form an epoch in the history of social movements at the end of the nineteenth century. Viewed from the standpoint of the work accomplished in the past six months, I do not hesitate to say that the organization has a brilliant future. To sketch the past work is to outline the future spirit, ends and aims of the National Congress of Mothers.

We desire to have it always a universal, a non-sectarian organization. We want no social distinctions, no unnecessary parliamentary rules and regulations, no laws or by-laws. We will have only the broad code of all women laboring for the great end of womanhood, the training of good men and women for our glorious Republic. As Hans Ballin says: "Let there be fewer studies of Latin and Greek and more attention given to the bone and sinew of our country, the growing boys and girls. Let there be fewer balls and fancy dress for the children, and good, healthful play in comfortable garments substituted instead."

I believe in the necessity for organized effort on the part of both parents and not of mothers alone. But because mothers from the earliest ages have been the recognized factor in the formation of the character of the child, I have endeavored first to attract and concentrate the attention of maternal love to this great movement.

Again, the history of our country has clearly shown hundreds of times that when women hold of a measure it focuses national attention. Where the end of an organization is such a noble and elevating one it will, I know, be heartily endorsed by the masculine as well as the feminine element of our people. The earnest enthusiasm everywhere manifested during the first Congress of Mothers makes plain that the seed has already fallen on good soil. We expect a speedy and abundant harvest.

It is with the consciousness that the child is of primary importance in solving the social problem of latter day civilization that the National Congress of Mothers called upon the Nation for hearing. There are those who claim to think that misery, the sin and the degradation in the world to-day must have its counterpart in the ages to come, even as this age is now reflecting the depths of life that have been obscured by the twilight of ages.

This is a terrible belief, one which acknowledges evil as a more potent factor than good. Such a theory could not maintain itself in the face of evidence offered by the pupils in any properly conducted kindergarten. There the ideal seems nearer of realization than in any other spot in the world. If you visit such a school your heart will be warmed by its sunny, loving atmosphere. Then ask yourself if such a course could be pursued throughout the entire educational period, whence would the criminals come? What would become of the jails, of the asylums, the reformatories and other institutions whereby society protects itself from the "submerged truth." Civilization, which throws so few barriers around helpless childhood, allowing it instead to run riot in a contaminating environment until its strength menaces society, and then cages it as it would a wild animal which has wandered from its jungle.

As the end and purpose of the mothers' clubs in its unified embodiment, the Mothers' Congress is to encourage and stimulate those whose efforts are already enlisted in the cause of childhood, to awaken those who have hitherto not given that serious thought and earnest effort which, essentially due the subject, the scope of the work is unlimited.

There has, as yet, been effected only such organization as is absolutely essential for the conduct of business. We do not intend to make any more specific arrangements for the future. We want no local features in any mothers' clubs. We will have no State officers, no divisions, no party lines whatsoever. Our clubs can be organized by any woman in any condition of life. She can call her friends together or she can present the subject to any organization of which she is already a member. It is requested that clubs taking up the subjects of motherhood, child culture and kind